

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NASSAU 01027 062151Z

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FM AMEMBASSY NASSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5652

S E C R E T NASSAU 1027

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR XL BF

SUBJ: CASP-SUBREGIONAL POLICY PAPER

REF: STATE 115882

1. EMBASSY REGRETS HAVING MISSED DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING ITS VIEWS FOR SUBREGIONAL PAPER. WE ARE FRANKLY DOING CATCH-UP REVIEW AT THIS TIME. WE NEED GUIDANCE ON HOW WE MIGHT BEST CONTRIBUTE TO EXAMINATION OF CARIBBEAN REGIONAL PROBLEMS AND ANALYSIS OF THE SEVERAL ISSUES/QUESTIONS POSED IN STATE 69207.

2. DIFFICULTY WE ARE ENCOUNTERING IS THAT BAHAMIAN PERSPECTIVE IS DISTINCTLY NOT CARIBBEAN, NOR DOES THE GCOB PERCEIVE ITS FOREIGN SECURITY AND ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES AS BEING SIMILAR TO OR SOMEHOW LINKED WITH THOSE OF THE CARIBBEAN NATIONS.

3. AN IMPORTING NATION, BAHAMIAN CONCERNS ABOUT ACCESS TO OR COST OF RAW MATERIALS AND KEY PRODUCTS ARE MORE NEARLY THOSE OF THE US. THE BAHAMAS IS NOT A MEMBER OF CARICOM AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS CONCERNED WITH ECONOMIC POLICY SEE NO ADVANTAGE TO THE BAHAMAS IN MEMBERSHIP. US AND BAHAMIAN TRADE AND INVESTMENT RELATIONSHIPS ARE CLOSE, AND THE US DOMINATES THE BAHAMIAN MARKET.

4. WITH RESPECT TO THE POLITICAL SIDE, THE BAHAMAS CONSIDERS ITSELF AN ATLANTIC NATION, AND PURSUES A FOREIGN POLICY WHICH EMPHASIZES TIES WITH THE US, UK, AND CANADA; ADMITS OF A PLACE IN THE HEMISPHERE BUT NOT NECESSARILY THE OAS; AND

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SECRET

PAGE 02 NASSAU 01027 062151Z

TO DATE, ILLUSTRATES, IN THE UN, A BAHAMIAN SENSE OF DISCOM-

FORT WITH THIRD WORLD CAUSES AS WELL AS GENERAL ALOOFNESS. WHERE GCOB POSITIONS HAPPEN TO AGREE WITH THOSE OF CARICOM STATES, THE BAHAMAS UNDOUBTEDLY WOULD USE ITS MEMBERSHIP IN THE CARIBBEAN COMMONWEALTH COMMUNITY TO ENCOURAGE COORDINATED ACTIONS. ON LAW OF THE SEA, BAHAMIANS BELIEVE, EVEN IF WE DON'T AGREE, THAT THEY ARE ACTING IN A WAY THAT MEETS OUR MUTUAL INTEREST, ADMITTEDLY AS UNDERSTOOD AND DEFINED BY THEM, AND COORDINATION OF LOS POLICIES WITH OTHER CARIBBEAN STATES WILL BE TACTICAL, NOT PHILOSOPHICAL. WITH THE QUALIFICATION THAT NOTHING IS EVER FOR CERTAIN, OR CERTAIN FOREVER, BAHAMIAN POSITIONS, ESPECIALLY ON ISSUES SUCH AS CUBA, PANAMA, AND THIRD WORLD CAUSES, WILL CONTINUE TO REFLECT THE IMPORTANCE TO THE BAHAMAS OF THE US TIE RELATIVELY MORE THAN ANY NOD TO CARIBBEAN SOLIDARITY.

5. GIVEN ITS ATLANTIC PERSPECTIVE, ITS US-UK TIES, AND ITS MODERATE, ALMOST CONSERVATIVE, APPROACH TO THE WORLD AROUND IT. THE BAHAMAS REPRESENTS NO REAL THREAT TO U.S. SECURITY AND DEFENSE INTERESTS IN THE AREA OFF OUR COAST, AND IS UNLIKELY TO SUBSTITUTE THE US UMBRELLA, WHICH IT THINKS COVERS IT AT PRESENT, FOR A REGIONAL ARRANGEMENT THAT DOES NOT INCLUDE THE US. IT WILL MAKE ITS OWN DECISIONS ON US FACILITIES. WHILE IT IS WILLING TO OBSERVE THE FORMS OF COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN TRADITION AND COLLEGIALITY, IT IS NOT ABOUT TO ENTRUST SUBSTANCE TO THEM, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY SEEM MORE OFTEN THAN NOT TO BE JAMAICAN INSTITUTIONS INTENDED TO SERVE JAMAICAN ASPIRATIONS.

6. AS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, AGAIN THE BAHAMAS SEES NOTHING IN CARICOM FOR IT AND HAS LEARNED, TO ITS GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT, THAT THE REST OF THE WORLD CONSIDERS IT A RICH NATION, NOT ELIGIBLE FOR MUCH IN THE WAY OF ASSISTANCE. AS FOR UWI AND THE BAHAMAS, THERE ARE MORE TIES WITH DAD COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND PRAIRIE VIEW A&M. UWI DOES NOT SERVE AS AN INTELLECTUAL FOCAL POINT FOR MOST BAHAMIANS. PART OF THE REASON FOR THE NEW COLLEGE OF THE BAHAMAS IS TO PROVIDE SUCH A FOCAL POINT, BAHAMIAN NOT JAMAICAN, AND AT HOME, NOT ABROAD. BAHAMIANS TRY TO ACKNOWLEDGE MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN IN CONCEPTUALLY SAFE AREAS, AND MINISTERIAL CONFERENCES AND UWI ARE TWO OF THEM.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 NASSAU 01027 062151Z

7. THE ABOVE BEING OUR PERSPECTIVE, AS WELL AS THE BAHAMIAN WE THINK, AND BOTH OF US BEING OUT OF THE MAINSTREAM OF CARIBBEAN REGIONALISM, WE FIND WE COULD ONLY GUESS THE ANSWERS TO SOME OF THE QUESTIONS POSED.

8. WHAT ONE ENDS UP WITH, PERHAPS UNFORTUNATELY, IS A CONCLUSION THAT IF THE BAHAMAS IS NOT CARIBBEAN, IT MUST BE SPECIAL

TO THE AREA, AND IF THAT IS SO, IT MUST HAVE SPECIAL RELATIONSHIPS, INCLUDING THAT WITH THE US. WE THINK IT FAR TOO EARLY IN THE US-BAHAMIAN POST-INDEPENDENCE RELATIONSHIP TO MAKE THIS CONCLUSION A FEATURE OF US POLICY. BUT WE BELIEVE IT COULD BE A FEATURE OF THE REPORT BEING PREPARED, EXCLUDING THE BAHAMAS AS NOT CARIBBEAN, BY ITS VIEWS OR OURS, AND TAKING A RESERVATION ON WHETHER IT WILL PARTICIPATE IN ANY WAY IN CREATING OR RESOLVING THE ISSUES WE ANTICIPATE FOR THE REST OF THE AREA.

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